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*V Briefings*

9 MAR 1965

**MEMORANDUM FOR: Assistant to the Director for Public Affairs**

**SUBJECT : Forthcoming Meeting of Elie Abel with  
Mr. McCone.**

1. In response to your memo of 4 March 1965, subject as above, there are attached answers to questions 3, 4, 8, 9, 11, 12 and 13, posed by Mr. Abel.

2. To assist you in preparing a briefing aid for the DCI and for the DCI's guidance in his conversation with Mr. Abel, we have included the classification of each paragraph of the answers in parentheses.

3. The answers have not been coordinated with DD/I or DD/P.



Albert D. Wheelon  
Deputy Director  
for  
Science and Technology

**Attachment:**  
**As stated**

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Answers to Questions Posed by Elie Abel, NBC

QUESTION #3.

Why did it take so long to get hard proof (as distinct from general evidence that rockets of some kind were going in)? Were we handicapped by effects of Castro crackdown on agents following Bay of Pigs?

ANSWER:

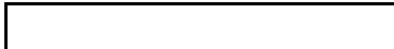
The arrival of the SA-2 missile in Cuba in mid-1962 generated many reports from Cubans unfamiliar with modern military equipment concerning the introduction of missiles into the island. The SA-2 missiles, launchers and associated equipment were reported from the time of their arrival and information on the disposition of these missiles was reported. At the same time the SA-2 was being introduced into Cuba many of the reports of missile sightings referred to missiles ranging from 35-feet up to 75-85 feet. By the first of October we knew that the SA-2 was being deployed in Cuba and we had some evidence from collateral reports that other kinds of missiles had been seen. At this time one of the major problems confronting the Intelligence Community was to identify the other missiles being reported and determine from the identification whether the missiles were offensive or defensive. A review of all of these reports, sometime after the 14th of October 1962, showed that only three proved to have had any validity so far as the size and location of Soviet medium range ballistic missiles were concerned.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] We were on constant lookout for the routing or arrival of a similar type vessel to Cuban waters. Mr. McCone in August had the insight to request a stepped-up sea reconnaissance by the Navy to detect the transiting or arrival of this particular kind of ship in Cuba. At least one such ship did arrive in Cuba, which increased Mr. McCone's concern about the possibility of an MRBM missile system being introduced. The Intelligence Community had levied requirements for U-2 reconnaissance of a number of points and areas in Cuba where, based on reports and intellectual judgment, the reported missiles might be found. These areas had been assigned various priorities for urgency of coverage. [REDACTED]

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There is no doubt that we were handicapped by the extra security measures taken by the Cubans to preclude open detection of various movements and installations in Cuba after the Bay of Pigs invasion.



**QUESTION #4.**

What about reported gaps in U-2 flight schedule. Were criteria perhaps too rigid (reportedly flights scrubbed any day when forecasters said 25% of target area would be obscured?) What's truth of Hurricane story?

**ANSWER:**

U-2 surveillance flights over Cuba in 1962 were authorized at the rate of two per month to give sample coverage of the area. With the introduction of the SA-2 missile in Cuba and the discovery of the sites in photography on 29 August and 5 September 1962, a meeting was held in Mr. McGeorge Bundy's office on 10 September 1962. Among those present were Mr. Bundy, Mr. Rusk, Mr. Robert Kennedy, General Carter and General Lansdale, Mr. Tom Parrott, Secretary to the Special Group, and others. The following reconnaissance program was approved at that meeting:

- a. Four flights to be flown against Cuba: two peripheral and two overflights.
- b. The overflights were limited to Eastern Cuba east of 77° west.
- c. Overflights were to be planned to minimize time over denied territory.
- d. Isle of Pines could be overflowed as an individual mission.
- e. All four flights to be planned to maximize safety.

Permission was given to commence planning and flying four missions on 10 September. The Isle of Pines mission was flown on 17 September, but the weather was worse than briefed and the target completely cloud-covered. Hurricane Celia was approaching the vicinity of the Caribbean at this time which accounts for much of the poor weather forecast and

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encountered in mid and late September. The first successful flight, of the four flights approved, overflew Bama and Guantanamo on 26 September. The weather was studied continuously, and the CIA was under order to launch only when the weather was forecast to be less than 25 per cent overcast. The fourth mission was flown on 7 October 1962, a time span for the four missions of almost a month. Upon completion of the analysis of all missions through 7 October 1962, it was concluded that virtually the whole island of Cuba was now protected (potentially) by Soviet type SA-2 sites. As a result of this analysis, it had to be assumed that any further overflight of Cuba was, or would be in the near future, subject to intercept by an SA-2 when the sites became operational. [REDACTED]

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QUESTION #8.

How do you explain the reported fact that there had been no reconnaissance of Western Cuba from September 5 to October 4th, when Mr. McCone at or after a meeting of the United States Intelligence Board ordered a step-up in surveillance of that part of the island?

ANSWER:

Specifically, through 7 October Agency U-2 operations were directed against the approved routes delineated by those attending the 10 September meeting at the White House. Unsatisfactory weather was the only reason for not having conducted more than four missions up to 7 October. As a result of these four missions, intelligence reported the deployment of SA-2 sites in the western part of Cuba with such density that overflight of western Cuba in the future would involve a much greater risk than heretofore encountered. [REDACTED]

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QUESTION #9.

Who proposed the shift from civilian CIA pilots to SAC pilots, when and why?

ANSWER:

It became obvious as the developing situation changed in character from a strategic to a tactical problem that Agency assets could not keep up with the pace of reconnaissance required. It was President Kennedy

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who authorized the use of SAC U-2's and SAC pilots to over-fly Cuba. Although the Agency had the route planned on 12 October to cover Santiago, Santa Lucia, Cabanas and Deloitte (the first discovered MRBM sites), and had, in fact, alerted for this mission for the following day. SAC took over the operation and flew the same mission on 14 October 1962. A total of 17 missions were flown by SAC in their first week of operations. The limitations imposed on CIA Cuban overflights did not apply to the SAC operations in view of the nature of the threat to the United States which had been revealed by photography. [REDACTED]

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QUESTION #11.

Did the first pictures (Oct. 14-15) show any missiles or just scars in the earth and other evidence that site construction might be underway?

ANSWER:

This question can be answered in two parts - MRBM's and IRBM's. MRBM - the photographic missions on 14 and 15 October disclosed the presence of at least one Soviet regiment consisting of 8 launchers and 16 SS-4 MRBM's deployed in western Cuba at two launch sites. At that time, the equipment that was noted in place was unrevetted and continuing improvement of these sites was noted subsequent to 14 October. IRBM - construction of the fixed soft-sites for the SS-5 IRBM's were also detected by photographic missions on the 14th and 15th of October. No SS-5 missiles were detected in this or any subsequent photography. [REDACTED]

QUESTION #12.

When was construction started?

ANSWER:

Photography in late August disclosed no construction activity in the San Cristobal, Guanajay and Sagua La Grande area. However, construction activity was noted in these areas in mid-October. It was concluded that the actual construction of the IRBM soft-sites began in late September. [REDACTED]

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**QUESTION #13.**

At the time of the crisis, operating assumption was Russians would not put missiles in without being prepared arm them with nuclear warheads. Any evidence they were ever delivered to Cuba (or diverted)?

**ANSWER:**

At the time of the crisis, it was indeed assumed that the Soviets would not have put strategic missiles in Cuba without being prepared to arm them with nuclear warheads. Preparations were in fact underway for the storage and handling of nuclear warheads at the launch sites. While we have never been able to establish with certainty that they actually arrived in Cuba, there is circumstantial evidence that missile warheads may well have reached Cuban port. [REDACTED]

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Premier Khrushchev indicated twice during the Cuban crisis that there were nuclear warheads in Cuba. On 24 October 1962, he told Westinghouse President Knorr, "We have anti-aircraft missiles and we have ballistic missiles with both nuclear and high-explosives warheads already there." On 12 November, Khrushchev contended during his interview with British Ambassador Roberts that the USSR had fulfilled its obligation by removing Soviet missiles and "also nuclear warheads" from Cuba. Later, in the context of their discussion of the IL-28 bomber issue, Ambassador Roberts inquired whether all nuclear warheads had left Cuba and Khrushchev again confirmed that they had. [REDACTED]

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Six probable nuclear warhead bunker sites were under construction in Cuba, but were never finished. Concrete posts for separate security were available, but not erected. Nosecone vans, associated vehicles and dollies were observed in the vicinity of most of the bunkers, and were

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25X1 being loaded on several Soviet vessels at Mariel at the time of the withdrawal. Because there was no visible separate security in force around the incomplete bunkers or the nosecone handling equipment, there is no objective evidence of the presence of nuclear warheads at the launch sites. [REDACTED]

Evidence was subsequently obtained that nuclear warheads may have been brought into Cuba on board the freighter ALEKSANDROVSK in late October 1962. The ALEKSANDROVSK departed Guba Okolnaya, a part of the Severomorsk Naval Complex on the Murmansk Peninsula, at some unknown date in October. At some time between 29 October and 3 November it docked at Mariel and was photographed there on 3 November. On 5 November it departed Mariel with nosecone vans on deck. The ALEKSANDROVSK is noteworthy in that it was the only ship serving the missile build-up which departed from an Arctic port. It can be hypothesized that it was carrying a very sensitive cargo such as nuclear warheads and wished to avoid surveillance or possible incidents in Western-controlled waters, such as the exits from the Black Sea and the Baltic. If it did have nuclear warheads on board, it is questionable that they were unloaded, since no evidence of their presence at any launch sites was obtained. [REDACTED]

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